



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

Michael F. Vollmer, Commissioner

August 17, 2005

Brig. General James E. Sehorn
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
2 MLK, Jr. Dr.
1102 West Tower
Atlanta, Ga. 30334

Dear General Sehorn:

On behalf of all of the employees of the Department of Technical and Adult Education, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the recent assistance from your office in regard to investigation number 05-048.

You and your staff followed through with our request for assistance and devoted considerable time and effort to produce a thorough investigation into the allegations of nepotism and misconduct within our Adult Literacy division. The seriousness of your findings mandated that we take immediate action to correct those issues, and which we have done.

Your report also included recommendations for action, so please let me update you on our progress.

Three of the employees named in the investigation, Dr. Jean Devard-Kemp, Dr. Audrey Fisher, and Mr. Grailyn Wells, are no longer employed by our agency. In addition, another Adult Literacy employee whose job application was proven to be falsified has been terminated.

Your investigation revealed serious instances where lack of communication and control between the agency managers and those in charge of human resources allowed for acts of nepotism and large salary increases for unqualified individuals. Much of that could have

been prevented if past agency practices and policies had required more checks and balances between the commissioner, assistant commissioners, college presidents, and the agency's director of human resources.

It is evident that we must take proactive measures to revise existing personnel policies and develop new policies, where needed, to ensure that our system-wide approach to human resources management more effectively compliments our business objectives. Importantly, those human resources practices must more closely adhere to acceptable professional standards and be in compliance with applicable laws, rules and regulations.

As you know, I have received approval from the State Board of Technical and Adult Education to implement a stronger anti-nepotism policy. These actions are the starting points of a greater, system-wide emphasis on the importance of human resources management to our agency's mission. As you are aware, these efforts will require both time and additional resources, including more staff in the department's Office of Human Resources and at a number of our colleges.

I strongly agree with your recommendations for an enhancement of central office scrutiny of all job applications, including transcripts and job history. At this point, however, our fiscal resources will not allow for the hiring of the additional human resource personnel needed to complete that entire process at the central office level. Until we are appropriately staffed, we must depend on a renewed effort in our colleges to ensure that all background information is verified before a hiring decision is made. I have everyone's commitment to that standard, and I expect to see great improvement in these processes.

Please also be advised that all college presidents and DTAE assistant commissioners have completed a review of the qualifications of all current faculty and staff in order to ensure the job effectiveness of those employees. Each president and assistant commissioner has also been instructed to be mindful of all established rules, policies and procedures for agency business practices and to communicate the same to their faculty and staff.

I have also instructed all college presidents and DTAE division heads to remind their staff of agency and GTA policies regarding personal use of computers and related equipment.

Please allow me to again express my deep appreciation for not only the extent of your investigation, but also for your interest in DTAE and its employees. DTAE is an

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outstanding state agency, yet the negative actions of a few managed to cast an unfair shadow of doubt on the many ethical, honest and hard-working employees who are the core of our department. With your help, we have worked to address those negatives and restore integrity in everything we do.

Thank you for the outstanding work you and your staff do for Georgia government and the citizens of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. F. Vollmer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael F. Vollmer
Commissioner